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COTTON RAISED BY WOMEN.

New Field for Which They Are Especially Adapted Opened in New England.

It is a little difficult to imagine a trim New England home set in the midst of a rambling cotton field, but it is said that this will soon become a common spectacle, for Massachusetts has recently been made to yield fleecy blossoms which for quality at least cannot be excelled in Georgia or Carolina, says the New York Tribune.

Two thousand South Sea Island plants constitute the first Boston crop of cotton. This was raised and brought to marketable perfection by the city forester, Mr. Doogue, and from this nucleus is destined to spring, it is said, scores of cotton plantations up among the bleak New England hills, where in time past the farmers have been forced to expend all their energy in making the ground yield potatoes.

Mr. Doogue did not raise his 2,000 plants for his own benefit solely, but that the many young men and women about to start out for themselves might find a new line of endeavor open to them. He explained his theory of New England cotton raising to superintendents of textile and industrial schools, brought the matter before boards of public education in numerous suburban towns near Boston and finally succeeded in having a course on practical cotton raising added to the curriculum of the public schools of Boston.

Dozens of little plants were sent to the schools and work was begun. It was at first thought that only the men would take this course, but it proved so alluring that young women eagerly joined the classes, and last spring, in Roxbury, the first cotton plantation in Massachusetts was started by eight young women, who planted, picked and sold their cotton themselves, hiring in the busiest season, when help was necessary, only women workers. The venture was a decided success, and this year will find numerous cotton fields scattered throughout Massachusetts, where part of, if not all, the work will be done by women.

The labor attendant upon the successful raising of cotton seems particularly fitted to womankind. With a big shade hat to shield her from the sun a woman can find a sure cure for "nerves" down among the green plants and snowy blossoms of a cotton field. Then, too, and most important of all, cotton raising in the east is sure to prove a most lucrative business, for New England manufacturers will be more than anxious to procure the home product if it is of as good a quality as that which they are now forced to import from the southern states. The cost of transportation will thus be saved, and, while the planters will be able to sell with profit, the manufacturers will also be able to buy more cheaply. The cotton seed is also valuable as a commercial product.

A great attraction for many women in the raising of cotton will probably be found in the fact that the work gives ample leisure for study and recreation. The season extends only from spring until the latter part of September, so the entire winter is free. The busiest time is at the end of July or early part of August, when the balls burst and the cotton has to be picked and marketed.

Climatic conditions have a great influence over cotton plants, and the New England grower will have a hard pull, but it is believed that it will in the end be a successful one. Extremes of frost are ruinous to the cotton plant, but so are extremes of heat, and in dealing with the latter evil New England has the advantage over Carolina. The specimens taken from the initial New England plantations prove, it is said, that the soil of that section is just as well adapted as that of the south to the production of cotton, and the plant could probably be grown in New York or Pennsylvania or the western states as well as in New England.

Siberian Fish.

The chief difficulty in the way of turning to account the vast supply of salmon in the rivers of Siberia, says the Springfield Republican, has been the lack of a market. The experiment is now being tried of sending the fish frozen to England, and the first shipload has recently arrived. There has been criticism on hygienic grounds of the pickled salmon put up in Siberia by convict labor, but this objection is, of course, much less applicable to the fish that are sent whole. The supply of salmon seems to be almost unlimited, but it is not allowed to take them in the lower reaches of the rivers, when they are in their finest condition, because this prevents them from spawning.

Mercury-Vapor Lamps.

Mercury-vapor lamps produce a light, as is well known, that is greenish blue in color, and which produces an unpleasant effect, not inaptly described as "ghastly," on the faces of persons illumined by it. This is because the spectrum of the light has no red in it. It has been proposed to add a red reflecter or globe to correct this, but the experiment shows that the light is not changed in color, but obstructed.

The Message of the Bells

A New Year Story

By ELIZABETH PRICE

Sun clouds scudded gustily across the sky, hiding the peaceful face of the moon, whose radiance touched the edges of her somber veil with a fringe of silver. The great gray tower lifted its head far aloft in the midnight stillness, and the wind moaned around its rough-hewn corners a requiem for the dying year. Within the tower sat the old bell-ringer, waiting for the stroke of 12 from the clock, and, as he waited, his thoughts drifted back to the years long buried in the dimness of the past—the years when his floating white hair had been crisp and black, when his long, slender fingers were strong and supple and struck from the midnight chimes music of entrancing beauty.

Oh, happy memory! Oh, long ago! It was on another night like this that Ruprecht was born; and the joy which beamed from the pale young mother's face was reflected in his own, as he left her baby on her bosom and rushed to the bell-tower to make his chimes a paen of praise to the Father who had filled his life with blessing. How they loved him—that baby—their only one—

"THE CLOCK ON THE MANTEL WARNED FOR TWELVE, AND THE MUSICIAN TURNED TO THE PIANO AND PLAYED AGAIN SIMPLY AND LOVINGLY PLEYEL'S HYMN."

their all! How he and Elspeth had watched each new development—how proudly guided the first tottering step; how carefully repeated the first lisping word! How joyfully they trained and taught him, while the father, too busy in his struggle for their maintenance to realize his great ambition, transferred it uncomplainingly from his own future to that of his son! Nor had their hopes been vain. The boy studied—improving every opportunity with untiring zeal, until at last the great organ in the cathedral below thundered its glorious music responsive to the touch of the boyish fingers. People thronged to hear. Ruprecht's services were demanded elsewhere—brilliant prospects opened before him, and the inevitable separation drew near.

New Year's Eve! How many anniversaries this shadowy hour held! The boy bade them good-by while Elspeth clung to him and sobbed, and her husband rushed away to tell the chimes his agony as he had poured into them his joy. As he sat waiting even as now, a step came up the stair, and some one entered the belfry chamber, and the voice he loved said tenderly: "Mein Vater, let me play the chimes to-night. I will leave with them a message to comfort you when you are sad—a message for you and the mother, too.

"When I hear it in the far-off land it will be my mother's voice that sings to me, and when you play it, mein Vater, it will say to you, 'Ruprecht loves me.' Then you will pray 'God watch over my boy and keep him safe for me,' and the All-Father will hear."

When Ruprecht struck the massive keys it was the simple old Pleyel's hymn he played, but he lent his beautiful voice to the clangor of the bells and sang his mother's favorite words:

"Children of the Heavenly King
As ye journey sweetly sing;
Sing your Saviour's worthy praise
Glorious in His works and ways."

A moment later he was gone. The years had been many and long since then, but no tidings ever came, and Elspeth's hair grew white before the look of expectancy in her dear eyes changed to the clamness of resignation. He was dead, of course. They knew now that it must be so, though they had not given up hope till they had left the old home and followed their wanderer to the new country. They had heard of the wrecked ship, to be sure, but hope dies hard. Perhaps if they had been patient—had stayed on amid the scenes of his childhood—he might have come back to them; but how could they be patient when the world was so wide, and half of it lay between them and the lane that had called their child. They were only waiting now—he and Elspeth—for the summons which should call them to the happy reunion in a home where there would be no sad good-bys, where music knows no minor, and hearts forget how to ache.

The first stroke of midnight sounded and an instant later the bells pealed forth, while the old man sang with trembling lips and voice that no one heard but God—as he had sung every New Year since that one:

"Children of the Heavenly King
As ye journey sweetly sing,
Sing your Saviour's worthy praise
Glorious in His works and ways."

Then, as the last reluctant echo died away, he stumbled down the narrow stairs toward home and Elspeth.

Not far from the belltower stood a mansion, where a great throng had assembled to watch the old year out and the new year in. Silken draperies rustled, jewels gleamed, music rippled on the perfumed air, and happy voices rang sweet and high. But every sound was silenced, and bright eyes grew dim in the flood of melody which suddenly poured about the gay throng. They crowded toward the music room, trying to catch a glimpse of the player. Those who were near saw a slender man, with fair curling hair brushed back from a brow as pure as a woman's. The face was pale and the eyes sad, but about the sensitive mouth played an expression of rare sweetness and beauty. Quietly he sat before the grand piano, playing without the slightest effort such masterful music as had hushed the listeners to awe-struck silence.

"Who is he?" was the question passed from one to another when at last the cessation of the music broke the spell.

"He is a friend of father's," their hostess told them. "Father met him abroad some years ago, and by helping him in a search for some missing friends, won his heart. The search was not successful, but that did not seem to lessen Prof. Von Bulow's gratitude, and they have corresponded in a desultory way ever since. Father invited him here for the holidays this year, but he declined the invitation, then this evening suddenly and unexpectedly appeared. These great musicians are always eccentric, you know. I heard him tell father that this is an anniversary he doesn't like to spend alone. Some love story probably. No, he isn't married. He spends his entire time with his wonderful music. That is really all I know about him." With that the interested guests were forced to be content, for the player had vanished from among them as suddenly as he appeared, and soon the gayety resumed its sway.

At 11 o'clock the hostess seated her guests in a circle, saying: "Now we will turn down the lights and tell ghost stories till midnight. Everybody must contribute something. The more gruesome and harrowing the better," she added laughingly. The young people fell in with the spirit of fun, and ghosts walked, hobgoblins shrieked and ghouls moaned, till the more timid begged for mercy.

It was almost 12 o'clock when a new voice suddenly broke into a momentary pause. Everyone looked up to see the musician standing in the door.

"My friends," he said, "my story is not of the spirits of the unseen world—it is of a lad in the far-away Fatherland, who once, on a night like this, left home and friends and went out into the wide world, with music as the priestess who presided at the altar, where burned the fires of his ambition. So brightly did this fire burn that its glow hid the quieter emotions which lingered in the shadow, and father and mother and home were left behind. The youth had not dreamed of the pain of broken ties—but he afterward learned it all.

"Shipwrecked, a weary sickness and deliverance, miscarried letter returned to its writer long afterward—all these came between the lad and his loved ones, and when at last, overcome by the deadly 'heimweh,' he turned toward home, he found it empty—the loved ones gone, while the chimes in the tower which the father had played ever since the lad had lived, responded sadly to the touch of strange, unfriendly hands.

"With breaking heart the lad turned back to the country of his adoption, hoping, against hope, to find the dear ones, who had followed him there during his long silence. The years have passed and the lad is a man, but the father and the mother he has not found, nor does he expect to greet them again until the New Year of Heaven dawns for him, as he believes it has already dawned for them. So, when the midnight comes I play each New Year's Eve as I—as the lad played on that last night long ago—my message to my dear ones."

The clock on the mantel warned for 12, and the musician turned to the piano and played again simply and lovingly Pleyel's hymn, singing as in the long ago the beautiful words his mother loved.

As the last note died away in the quiet room the tower clock began to strike, but was drowned by the music of the chimes. A thrill ran through the hushed circle as they recognized the strain they had just heard, but the musician arose with a mighty cry: "Mein Vater!" and ran out into the night, guided by the music of the bells.

When the old bell ringer shut the door he could not see, for the tears that blinded him, the hurrying figure on the pavement. A moment later he was gathered close to the heart that had yearned for him through all the space of silence and loneliness, and together, in the opening of the glad New Year, they went out from the shadow of the bell tower, home to Elspeth, whose mother heart came near to bursting, with the joy of a son's home coming.—Minneapolis Housekeeper.

Lights and Shadows of Prison Life

By Mrs. Maud Ballington Booth,
of the Volunteers of America.

The shadows of prison life are not the cells. It is not the prison diet that makes the men behind the bars hopeless. It isn't the uniform that causes them anguish. The real shadows are those which await them when they have left prison.

Instead of the shadow passing, when they pass the prison gates and once more find themselves free, it deepens. They remember the wasted chances and the lost opportunities. Their nerves are shattered and they are all unstrung. If they go to a man and tell him they have served a term in prison they will find no employment. If they do not tell their story and it is found out the employer immediately concludes that he has willfully deceived and there is no room for the man.

The people cling to the old theory, "once a convict, always a convict." It was taken from the old maxim, "once a thief, always a thief," and its only cause for being quoted is its age.

Let me tell you the story of a Sing Sing prisoner and the part a scientific writer played in his life. The prisoner was hard, not in crime, but by nature. He was cynical, morose. One day I found him in a worse mood than usual. I asked him what the trouble was. He looked at me, smiled in his cynical way, and asked me if I had read an article printed that morning in one of the scientific journals.

He told me that the author, who was a prominent one, had taken the Sing Sing prison for his subject. He had portrayed to the best of his ability the inmates of the institution. He had found them a hardened lot. He had compared them with the people of the outside world and had found that they were different in all that goes to make genuine manhood.

"We are different," argued my cynical friend. "The man writes that we are, and I believe it."

Many other prisoners had read the article. They were all downcast. The article read very well to the people who sat in their homes and read it for amusement. But it had a different meaning for those men behind the prison walls. It took away their courage and their hope.

I am not in favor and am not a supporter of maudlin sentiment. When a man transgresses the law he must be punished. But people should be as kind as the law. The law says that you have offended and that you must be punished. It fixes the punishment at a certain number of years in a state prison. It says that the offender shall be deprived of his liberty for a certain time. But the people go farther. They say that a man shall be deprived of his standing for all time because he has transgressed.

There is a law in France which I believe to be a just one. It forbids people referring to a man who has transgressed as an ex-convict or an ex-prisoner.

HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR.

We're Likely to Be Traveling at That Rate Before Long.

We note with pleasure that our space devouring friends at Zossen have not yet satisfied their hunger for pace and touched the record the other day for no less than 140 miles per hour, says the Street Railway Journal. They seem to be overcoming air pressure rather comfortably up to the present, and we have heard nothing about the motors failing or the pressure caving in the front end of the car.

Perhaps the doubting gentlemen who figured on the motors burning out from overload at 80 miles per hour to 100 miles per hour will now be convinced that higher speeds are both possible and practicable. One hundred and forty miles per hour is a decidedly hot pace, but it will more than likely be beaten before we go to press. It has taken a good many years to evolve the two-minute trotting horse, but this year we have him in triplicate, and just so it has been with electric railroading. Once the records began to break they fairly blew up and left only small fragments.

One hundred and forty miles per hour, even if not outdone by a considerable margin, still means that the hundred-mile-an-hour train is much nearer to reality than it has ever been before. That speed is quite feasible whenever it is demanded, and it is, moreover, quite high enough to meet the requirements of humanity for some little time to come. Its real importance lies, as we have often remarked, in its application to long lines on which the saving of time would be material. Cutting down the running time to Flatbush or Hackensack may defer the dyspepsia of the commuter for another season or two, but it is not commercially important. It is cutting the time on long trains that counts—reducing the time to Washington to less than three hours, and converting the trip to Chicago into a mere night's run.

It is now announced that the experiments have been conducted largely with the idea of the early application of the system to the railroad connecting Berlin with Hamburg, distant by rail 176 miles from each other, and that an early conversion of that line is by no means improbable. Somehow the hundred-mile-an-hour train looks nearer than it did a few months ago, and our spy-glass is still trained in the direction of Germany.

Great Naphtha Fire.

Near the town of Baku, in the Caucasus, a great naphtha fire has been raging for two months. From five great "gushers" of the natural oil and five of the reservoirs in which it is stored enormous columns of flame have been towering day and night to a height at which they are visible for 20 or 30 miles around and the entire region is described as being wrapped in a pall of smoke often sufficiently dense to conceal the light of the sun. There is nothing to do but to wait till the conflagrations burn themselves out, which in the case of the "gushers" may take many months. Labor troubles have been acute in the Baku oil fields of late and it is believed that this enormous destruction is due to the act of an incendiary.

Water on Warships.

As nearly as possible 8,000 gallons of fresh water are used in a large battleship daily. About two-thirds of this is taken up by the boilers, and the remainder is used for drinking, washing, cooking, etc. When the store which she has taken out with her from port has been used up, a vessel has to depend upon her evaporators for further supplies. Every modern warship is fitted with evaporating machinery to distill salt sea water.